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ABSTRACT

The six stages of the concerns-based adoption model (CBAM) (G. Hall, R. Wallace, and W. Dossett, 1973) are the context for examining how one school sought to implement an inclusive vision of diversity within a gifted school program. The CBAM model informed the leadership style of the principal, but was not actually articulated as the model that the school would follow. The six stages are: (1) informational; (2) personal; (3) management; (4) consequence; (5) collaboration; and (6) refocusing. The informational stage involves a general awareness of the issues. In the second stage the administration and faculty began a focused process of examining student needs. The management stage of organization and implementation developed over 2 years and resulted in a stage of "consequence," in which some results became evident. In stage 5, the culmination of the faculty's work meshed with a formal review of the school's progress during the 10 years of the entire progress. Refocusing then involved the application of recommendations and issues pertaining to all aspects of diversity. Over the CBAM life cycle of almost 10 years in this school, some lessons were evident. One is that misunderstandings are common. Another is that student experiences of racism, bias, and gender harassment are both real and imagined, but must be initially examined as though "real." The involvement of the middle third of the faculty, those with a "wait and see" disposition towards various diversity initiatives, was required to make any activity a success. The commitment of the middle third was enough to bring the more reticent third into the activity. Empirical data were needed to shape policy decisions, but the most important factor was always to keep the students' interests first. The implementation of the CBAM model in this school setting shows the real complexities of educating for student diversity. Four appendixes contain a list of the stages of concern about innovation, the report of the committee on cultural pluralism, and information about reports from the Standing Committee on Cultural Diversity and the Middle States Self Study. (Contains 33 references.) (SLD)

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A PROGRAM FOR CHANGE

EDUCATING FOR RACIAL DIVERSITY

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Introduction

Schools are very fragile human organizations. They only become "communities" after considerable effort. There are no guarantees in this enterprise. To become a "community" which values diversity and difference as a source of vitality and strength is a core characteristic which separates the caring and compassionate school community from the typical "good school." So often we settle for the "good school" and fail in our efforts to realize community as a means to becoming a better school.

I hope these words do not sound harsh and uninviting. Rather, I want to startle and shake us from our common and complacent sense of the norms and the comfortable culture which characterize many of our school communities. When it comes to racial difference in the United States nothing can stay comfortable for long. Some social critics would argue that the basic fabric of society itself is being torn apart by issues of diversity (Huges, 1993; Schlesinger, 1992). Others would argue that dealing with such issues is simply facing the reality of everyday life (Bell, 1992; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Hacker, 1996; Lindholm & Hall, 1997; Ogbu, 1978; Steele, 1992). Nicholas Lemann (1997) stated the problem rather crisply: "The communication gap between whites and blacks is so vast that to generate any kind of civil discourse is a feat."

Yet, such discourse--civil, and so much more--must take place in schools if they are to be real communities which can learn from the rich cultural and racial dialogue and perspective sharing that such discourse can lead to. Failure to realize community aspirations and dreams in schools is tragic for all students, and in a special manner even more harmful and hurtful for gifted minority students since the leadership potential, and possibility for future understanding and

enrichment, may be lost in the void that follows failed school communities

Where Do You Stand: Between Promise and Possibility

Gifted education is the focal point today for such confrontations surrounding inclusion, race and class, between identification of gifted students and delivery of gifted education services, and, the need to enhance the entire system of comprehensive schooling by modeling successful practices of gifted education.

Unless the school--students, teachers, parents--has identified cultural diversity as a central value "worth fighting for" (Fullen, 1996) there will never be the possibility of true diversity and a celebration of the richness that defines the plurality within schools, and the institutional enrichment that accompany such personal and communal growth and affirmation.

The promise for dealing with racial differences within the gifted education community is very much alive in the literature and research within the field (Boykin, 1994; Ford, 1995,1996; Miserandino, Subotnik, & Ou, 1995; Ross, 1993), and in the practical application and development of school curriculum and policy (Frasier, et. al. 1995; Irvine, 1991; Miserandino, 1994; Peckron, 1996; Steele, 1992; Tatum, 1992, 1994).

Organizational Development in Diversity

Models for achieving the type of integration of the core racial values surrounding issues of diversity are seldom clear, clean, or easily implemented. The process of articulating and institutionalizing a view of diversity within the school community is, like democracy itself, messy but the only way to go. That is, the school community must look within itself for the resources and people required to lead the self-renewing process. For gifted students of color, a pro-active and self-renewing school community can offer powerful models of support and engagement not

found in other structures in our society. For all students, such an institution can shape lifelong values on racism and integration. Here is where the seeds of hope can be planted (Edley, 1996).

However, the impact of an entrenched bureaucracy cannot be underestimated when it comes to issues of leadership (Bennis, 1989). Within the school community, when such leadership is directed at responding to the complexity of diversity and racial perceptions within the school, the resistance will be enormous. Specifically, leadership within the school (be it within formal titles or in moral persuasion) must confront the vested interest of the majority which is preserved by exclusive policy and practices (McIntosh, 1988; Steele, 1992). In recent days the charge has been levied against the gifted education community that such programs reflect racial division and white privilege (Staples, 1997).

Models for achieving balance and integration of a vision of diversity embedded within the school as an institution are all predicated upon some shared understanding of giftedness within the school community. Indeed, in *Conceptions of Intelligence*, Sternberg and Davidson (1986) discuss the concept of giftedness as a cultural construction. Each program or school which has a gifted education focus defines this term, identifies students who they judge to be reflective of their operationalized criteria, and proceed to develop curricula and instructional models to further verify their definition of giftedness. A critical question the school must ask itself is: "where are the students of color, and how are their interests preserved by the school community?"

Two additional challenges arise: to what degree are such definitions exclusive in their practices, and how do school communities learn of this exclusiveness and reshape policy and practice to be more dynamic and inclusive of all cultures with the school community.

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One very useful and well-researched model which can be adapted for dealing with issues of diversity is the "concerns-based adoption model" (CBAM) articulated by Hall, Wallace, & Dossett (1973).

This model, like all empirically orientated models, reflects core stages dealing with readiness, planning, training, implementation, and maintenance phases of development of new ideas/practices. Unlike other models which reflect top-down models of implementation the CBAM model reflects progress at each stage as viewed from the perspective of the *teacher*.

This is a critical and significant perspective when it comes to issues of cultural diversity within the gifted education community. The reason for this is that the teacher is the mediator and daily embodiment of the institutional vision of diversity as *experienced* by the students. While the principal is a significant organizational symbol in terms of leadership on *behalf* of the vision, and parents are significant figures in terms of *support* for the vision, it is the teachers that are the dynamic link between the rhetoric of the vision and classroom achievement as reflected in the curriculum and instructional practices of the school.

The six stages of the CBAM model will be the context for examining how one school sought to implement an inclusive vision of diversity within a gifted school program.

The Hunter College High School Experience

At the outset, two aspects of the unfolding of the experience to develop a formal institutional understanding and shared vision of diversity within the school needs to be mentioned. First, while the CBAM model informed the leadership style of the principal, it was not articulated as "the model" the school would follow. The culture of the Hunter school community is fiercely independent and autonomous. Any perception that a "model" was being

imposed on the community would be met with immediate distrust. Rather, since the model starts from the point of view of the teacher, the principal used the CBAM model to guide administrative attempts at facilitating the development and articulation of the vision of inclusion. Second, the stages described took a long period of time to transverse. While the "process" of institutional reflection may have taken more time than some would want, for others it moved at too quick a pace.

Just as important as process are the "products" of this reflection period. The documents and policies developed have become institutional touchstones for all involved and served to mark real progress within the community. The discussion of the process below will serve to flesh out the critical moments in the movement through each of the CBAM stages (Hall, et al ,1973).

CBAM Applied to Diversity Awareness

The following chart serves to demonstrate the application of the CBAM model to the "innovation" of greater attention to, and inclusion of, issues surround the school's attempt to be more responsive to the diversity needs of its students.

Diversity Initiative as Mapped By CBAM
(see Appendix A for model)

CBAM Stages: Focus on Teacher	Application to Issues of Diversity
STAGE 0: AWARENESS--little concern about/or involvement with the innovation is valued	--use of standard curriculum materials which do not reflect cultural sensibility; --identification of gifted students based solely on standardized exams; --diversity seen as global, distant, and removed from daily school experience

STAGE 1 INFORMATIONAL--general awareness of issue, person unworried about self in relation to the issue	--1986, "Minority Speakout"--a student forum about race, document hardly noticed --1988, Middle States review with no focused attention paid to issues of diversity --no experience of staff development or curricula development based on needs of diverse student body
STAGE 2 PERSONAL--individual is uncertain about the demands of the issue, his/her adequacy to meet those demands	--Fall, 1991--formation of a Black Parents Group (Coalition of African American Parents--CAAP) --Fall, 1991--1993--establishment of first faculty committee to study issue of Cultural Pluralism. Formed as an *ad hoc* committee --June, 1992--student generated anecdotal experiences of bias and prejudice --February, 1993--formal discussion of issue at faculty meeting --Spring 1993--Fall, 1996--staff development activities geared to: awareness of prejudice, varied teaching/learning styles, and sub-committees examining core themes (recruitment, enhancement of trust and community, creating a more diverse student body, information, and developing a sense of vision).
STAGE 3 MANAGEMENT--attention is focused on demands of issue; organizing, scheduling, and use of resources critical	--Fall, 1993--second committee, established as a *standing* committee with membership from all school constituencies to deal with Cultural Diversity. --1993--1996--faculty meetings responding to subcommittee reports and recommendations --1993--1996-continuing use of staff development opportunities focused on diversity training and student learning.

STAGE 4 CONSEQUENCE--attention focuses on impact of issue on students you are responsible for; relevance for students, evaluation of outcomes	--1993--present: school newspaper articles on issues of diversity --1993--active student groups presenting assemblies on racial and cultural themes --1993--actual shift in significant units of the curriculum (Art, English, Science, and Social Studies)
STAGE 5: COLLABORATION--focus on coordination and cooperation with others regarding the issue and its implementation	--Fall, 1994--Standing Committee on Cultural Diversity offers a progress report --1996-1997: inclusion of Cultural Diversity as a formal committee within the Middle States evaluation process (report completed, June 1997) --Spring, 1996--Retreat For African-American Sons and Father/Significant Other --Spring, 1997--Standing Committee on Cultural Diversity offers a plan for establishing a bias panel to deal with student and staff experiences of bias --1996-present: formation of Black Men's Issues (student organization); and MOASIC (religious-cultural-racial discussion group)
STAGE 6: REFOCUSING--exploration of benefits of innovation; seeking better alternatives, definite ideas on how to improve innovation or key features of issue	--Spring, 1997--Bias policy discussed and reviewed by faculty --Communication of new policy to parents and students --Implementation of recommendations from 1997-1998 Middle States review process

Unfolding the Process

The above outline of the CBAM process needs to be given greater context for a deeper appreciation of each of the stages.

a) School Culture-- Norm, #1: Central to the entire enterprise, and the core motivating factor shared among members of the faculty, were the *perceived* needs of minority students

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While the faculty may have been split on some issues, they shared a common commitment to serving the needs of the students. This shared vision of what the school was about helped to give context and direction to the vision of being more inclusive and celebratory in diversity awareness, curriculum revision, and instructional variety. The power of this norm to mobilize the faculty to action cannot be underestimated.

The faculty was especially open to explore the needs of students as articulated by the students themselves. It wasn't until Stage 2, as outlined above, that the administration and faculty began a focused process of examining the needs of students. The initial impetus for this was the voice of students themselves as reflected in their anecdotal descriptions of their experiences of bias at school. The direct, and sometimes painful, articulation of this experience by students moved the faculty to action. These responses were given to the principal by the head of the Coalition of African American Parents; in turn, these were shared with the faculty at a formal faculty meeting.

After some initial resistance to the "message" conveyed by such student experiences, the faculty, ever so gently and hesitantly, moved into a discussion of issues raised by these stories. The power of student voices cannot be underestimated (Nieto, 1994). While the time was not ripe in 1986 (Stage 1) to work with student reflections (see Stone, 1992, for a description of the historical complexity of the late 1980's within the Campus Schools), the school climate of the early 1990's allowed for a renewed willingness to exam and respond to student needs.

Central to the faculty concern was the issue of how gifted minority students value, understand, and act upon their self-identity as a minority within a majority population of students. It was the experience of students sitting in front of them and participating in clubs and on teams

which gave concreteness to issues of identity and achievement. Such issues are complex for all students, parents, and teachers. Coping strategies for dealing with issues of their own culture of origin and other cultures has been explored in the literature (Fordham, 1988, Hamm & Coleman, 1997, Pajares, 1996). For Hunter students, such issues were deeply embedded within conceptions of giftedness and by peer competition, and were discussed and written about in the Middle States report, student newspaper articles, and in student groups (MOSAIC, and Black Mens Issues--see Stage 5).

b) Institutional stirrings: Stage 2 as described above was a phase which saw a great deal of activity and focus by student groups, parents, and faculty. Often activities within committees merged with Stage 3 concerns. Indeed, there appeared, over time, to be a reciprocal movement: as people became more aware of issues they sought input and control, as they assumed greater responsibility for the direction of discussion and activity, they sought more information. This overall movement, which eventually led to Stage 3--management, took place over two years. The momentum in this period was carried by the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Cultural Pluralism. This committee represented all segments of the school community and produced a report in March of 1993 suggesting 14 recommendations for the school. This report was unanimously accepted by the Faculty for implementation (see Appendix B)

The Management Stage (3) unfolded over the next two years (1993--1995), and corresponds most strongly with the activities of the Standing Committee on Cultural Diversity. This committee, a recommended outgrowth of the former committee on cultural pluralism was charged with reviewing and monitoring the implementation of the first committee's recommendations. During this same time, a smaller group of the faculty was meeting with the

administration to serve as a soundir g board for further school wide discussions and planning of faculty development activities. Between these two groups, about a third of the faculty was pro-actively and formally involved in discussion and sharing of ideas and concerns surrounding diversity issues. As a result of these discussions a variety of actions were put into place, and the Standing Committee on Cultural Diversity presented a formal analysis of the progress of the school community to the original fourteen recommendations (see Appendix C)

This report initiated Stage 4--Consequence. Progress was noted in many areas, and resulted in an enhanced sense of well-being for the work undertaken in this area. Such faculty-wide discussion and support set the climate for Departments to exam curriculum (most significantly in English and Social Studies) and gave further support to student groups to present ideas, write newspapers, articles (during this time the school supported between three and five student newspapers, three are currently active) and organize assemblies on a wide range of topics related to diversity issues.

Stage 5--Collaboration--the culmination of the work undertaken by faculty in the previous years jelled with a formal review of the school's progress during the last 10 years. With the inclusion of a special committee on Cultural Diversity in the Middle States self-study, the institution was taking the next bold step to formally hold itself accountable to both the ideals of diversity within a gifted population and to future generations of students, parents, and faculty

The report of the Middles States Committee is extensive and covers a variety of key areas recruitment of students and teachers, student perceptions and experiences, faculty growth and development, curriculum development across academic subject areas, library resources, parental involvement, and alumni involvement (see Appendix D)

Stage 6--Refocusing--The Middle States report keep's alive recommendations and issues pertaining to all facets of the institutional commitment to diversity. This document will serve a moral compass for the entire school community as it moves into the 21st Century.

Key Outcomes of the Process

While it is clear from an institutional point of view to all constituents within the school community that attention to diversity issues preserves the highest ideals of the Hunter community, the best proof of such a commitment is in the actual impact upon student learning. This impact ought to be felt in the curriculum, teaching strategies, and in the measured achievement of students.

a) Examination of achievement patterns: One of the critical ways to understand how students experience their achievement is to examine patterns of student attainment across the curriculum. For example, do actual grading patterns across student racial groups differ in a statistically significant manner, are there teacher grading patterns across racial groups, and what are the outcomes on key tests with regards to racial differences. Students often make the claim that some are graded differently for various non-academic reasons. It is important to see if such perceptions are accurate. Indeed, it is equally important that different skill and mastery levels of entering students are examined so as to understand and measure actual in-school achievement as a result of participation in a gifted program.

b) Curriculum revisions: The English Department initiated a process of eliciting from students, parents, teachers, and the professional literature suggestions for texts to be used in place of the traditional American and European-based curriculum. This process has allowed for a shift of approximately 30% of the texts to reflect non-Western material, and allows for a great deal of

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individualization of themes, authors and projects reflective of many diverse cultures. The elective program was expanded to include World Literature with a clear focus on texts which represented non-Western traditions.

The Social Studies Department redefined and expanded their coverage of the global community. Taking more time, and covering history outside of the traditional Western Civilization survey approach has allowed for greater breath and depth. In addition, both Departments have attempted to seek ways to bridge their respective programs to allow students new possibilities of integration of ideas and themes.

The Science Department has created a program which helps students understand scientists from diverse cultures. This program focuses on biographies of scientists. Students read and report on their subjects with a special emphasis on examining the ways in which their scientist overcame obstacles of racism or bias. Further activities found the Science Department working with the Art Department to develop a multi-disciplinary unit on Native Americans and their relationship to the earth.

The last example of curriculum work comes from the Counseling Department. They have organized the "Forum on Affirmative Action and College Admissions." Typically five college representatives from schools the students normally apply to (i.e., Columbia, Vassar, University of Chicago) are asked to present information and dispel myths surrounding affirmative action, race and other admission issues. Students hear formal presentations and then have a significant amount of time for questioning of the panelists. This has proven to be a very useful model for enabling students to raise and clarify issues surrounding prejudice, while at the same time, helping to establish a context for the Counseling Program which is supportive of students and their many

anxieties surrounding applying to college

The above samples are typical of the ways each academic department in the school has tried to build upon their understanding of the needs of minority students within the context of a gifted education program (further examples can be found in the Middle States report in Appendix D).

Lessons Learned

Over the course of the CBAM's life cycle of almost ten years, a number of institutional lessons were learned by members of the school community. While they do not serve as a cook book recipe to the CBAM process, they do reflect significant institutional marker events in the school community's development and have helped to reshape the school culture:

a) There is considerable room for misunderstanding. As obvious s this sounds, men and women of good faith often "see" school events and ideals very differently through the "lens" of their personal experience. Once a significant core of the faculty began to appreciate the experiences of their colleagues--perhaps the way a faculty member had to endure racism as a student or as a teacher, or suffer disparaging remarks from an irate parent--they were more open and willing to work with and lead students in exploring these same issues, or to hear parents voice their concerns in a PTA meeting or read between the lines of a student newspaper story about racial perceptions within the school community.

b) Student experiences of racism, bias, and gender harassment are both real and imagined, the developing "sense of self" of the adolescent demands that such situations are taken as real until time, effort, and understanding of the person and their situation indicates otherwise

c) Teachers are professionals willing to assume responsibility for moral leadership. The arena of race and diversity contains many myths and stereotypes. Teachers, over time, have proven very effective in assisting students to appreciate the complexity of such issues and to avoid facile and premature solutions.

d) The 1/3 Model: during the most significant phases of the CBAM model (stages 2 through 6), only 1/3 of the faculty could be viewed as solidly behind some initiative or workshop or activity. Another 1/3 had a "wait and see disposition," and the final 1/3 were perhaps fearful and resistant to change. The middle 1/3 were crucial: it was within these ranks that a plan or activity would take shape or fall apart. It was this group which, if given a solid rationale for moving ahead, would carry the more reticent 1/3, thus producing the majority needed to carry any initiative forward. Hence, I refer to this model of faculty leadership as the "model of sufficient support." With the support and effort of this middle 1/3 of the faculty, any activity was assured success. Unfortunately, the membership of each of these third's was mobile and shifting. Just as the problems confronting the community are fluid, so is the faculty response. The adults of the community were motivated to take risks and learn new behaviors when they believed they had control and influence over the new activity and were free from the threat of failing.

e) Never underestimate the pool of good will, and the resulting generation of options to solve problems which flows from this reservoir. The power of the 1/3 who are solidly on board for generating proactive programs to support the needs of minority students can quickly galvanize the remaining 2/3's into adopting programs, experimenting with teaching strategies, or exploring new works for inclusion in the canon of the curriculum.

f) Keep kids first! Sounds too obvious to be true. Don't be fooled! Parental input is

obviously essential, as is the participation of all key constituent groups within the school community. However, administrators, parents, and faculty must always be judged by how a program, policy or activity is serving the students best.

g) Use empirical data to shape policy decisions. While this may appear self-evident, some issues are not easily operationalized or measured. As with all statistics, the way an issue is framed or a question is asked, may result in a misleading outcome. For example, allowing students to self-identify their ethnic or racial category may account for shifts in numbers as the student matures over time and elects to self-identify with a different group. Hence, the number of African-American students may appear to increase or decrease depending upon a self-selected identification. The fluidity of self-identification is a variable to be studied on its own merits (Frable, 1977). To read "attrition" into this number if it goes down may not reflect the actual reality of the students' participation in the gifted program.

Conclusion

When an institution takes on as part of its mission and purpose to examine issues of diversity, and seeks to respond to the needs of its students as viewed from this perspective, it is making a commitment to explore a complex set of values and feelings. Leadership in this context must come from many sources as well as the more typical administrative roles. Such a commitment gives a new voice to all constituents, and enhances the meaning of shared decision making.

The above model and its application to issues of diversity is only the start of a conversation and a process. Given the current state of racial division within the United States and within the educational community specifically, ensuring that all races and cultures are treated in an

equitable manner will be as daunting a task as it is moral necessary

The solutions and strategies are deeply buried with the many conversations that will unfold in this process. Courage as well as vision is required. Derrick Bell (1992, p. 195) says it succinctly, (we need) "to fashion a philosophy that both matches the unique dangers we face, and enable us to recognize in those dangerous opportunities for committed living and human service."

Our imaginations are capable of this, our students' talents gift our efforts, and our moral compass has set the direction. Now, all that is required is the institutional will to enter the conversation, and be open to the others' point of view. There is nothing but a bankrupt future in holding fast to the status quo

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Appendix A

Stages of Concern About the Innovation*
(CBAM)

Stage 6 REFOCUSING: The focus is on exploration of more universal benefits from the innovation, including the possibility of major changes or replacement with a more powerful alternative. Individual has definite ideas about alternatives to the proposed or existing form of the innovation.

Stage 5 COLLABORATION: The focus is on coordination and cooperation with others regarding use of the innovation.

Stage 4 CONSEQUENCE: Attention focuses on impact of the innovation on students in his/her immediate sphere of influence. The focus is on relevance of the innovation for students, evaluation of student outcomes, including performance and competencies, and changes needed to increase student outcomes.

Stage 3 MANAGEMENT: Attention is focused on the processes and tasks of using the innovation, and the best use of information and resources. Issues related to efficiency, organizing, managing, scheduling, and time demands are utmost.

Stage 2 PERSONAL: Individual is uncertain about the demands of the innovation, his/her adequacy to meet those demands, and his/her role with the innovation. This includes analysis of hi/her role in relation to the reward structure of the organization, decision-making and consideration, or potential conflicts with existing structures or personal commitment. Financial or status implication os the program for self and colleagues may also be reflected.

Stage 1 INFORMATIONAL: A general awareness of the innovation and interest in learning more about it is indicated. The person seems to be unworried about himself/herself in relation to the innovation. She/he is interested in substantive aspects of the innovation in a selfless manner such as general characteristics, effects, and requirements for use.

Stage 0 AWARENESS: Little concern about or involvement with the innovation is indicated.

* Hall, G.E., Wallace, R.C., & Dossett, W.A. (1973). *A developmental conception of the adoption process within educational institutions.* Austin: Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, The University of Texas.

Appendix B

The Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Cultural Pluralism

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL PLURALISM
Hunter College High School
March 24, 1993

The original concept of the Committee on Cultural Pluralism was proposed by Dr. Miserandino at the beginning of the 1991-92 academic year as part of his continued efforts to enrich the culturally pluralistic character of the school. The task that he envisioned for the Committee was to explore ways to further recognize, enhance, and "celebrate" that pluralism. The Committee met for the first time on October 30, 1991. Meetings were held monthly for the remainder of that school year and resumed in the fall of the 1992-93 school year. The Committee was composed of representatives from all of the related student clubs in the school, faculty and parents.

At the first meeting it was decided that in order for the Committee to ultimately make meaningful recommendations, its members would have to examine the school's climate of diversity, the ways in which it is already acknowledged and "celebrated," and the problem areas that might be in need of focused attention. This examination was carried out in essentially four areas:

a) The clubs were asked to report about their activities and the role that the clubs play in the cultural life of the students;

b) The academic departments were surveyed using a questionnaire to learn the ways in which cultures are reflected in their curricula, new programs that have been and/or are being planned to enhance student awareness of other cultures, and the general assessment that the members of the departments would give to their programs in the area of cultural pluralism;

c) The Committee explored the connections that parents of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have to the school;

d) Entrance criteria and procedures were studied as was information about hiring practices as they relate to cultural diversity for our student body and our faculty.

These reports were presented orally and in writing to the Committee over the next few months.

This was a time-consuming process, and it was not always easy to accomplish because the whole issue of cultural pluralism in education and society, with its various theories, interpretations, and implications, is a sensitive one for many. This Committee was not exempt from those sensitivities.

During this investigation process the Committee examined the ways in which departments and individual teachers have undertaken actual curriculum revisions and/or made various efforts to enrich the existing curriculum to

reflect the cultural diversity of the school and community and to explore the issues associated with that diversity. It was learned that significant ongoing efforts have been made, many of them with the help of grant monies made available through the Principal's Fund. They included interdepartmental course offerings, selection of course materials that reflect the diverse student population, and conference attendance.

There was also an opportunity to discuss some of the concerns. They included: a) the lack of resources, both texts and ancillary materials; b) the need for increased teacher contact with the relevant issues of cultural diversity in the school and in the curriculum of their particular subject area; c) students' perceptions of teacher sensitivity toward them in the classroom and inequities in expectations and in opportunities made available to them; d) gaps that exist between home and school and the problems faced by students as they attempt to bridge those gaps; e) the sense of isolation felt by some students that may result from being from a culturally different environment.

While efforts have been made to include parents from the various communities represented in the school, it was acknowledged that these efforts must continue in order to ensure their consistent, active involvement in PTA and in general school affairs. It was found that those involved in staff recruitment and hiring at the Campus Schools are ever mindful of their responsibility in this regard, although it is often difficult to find applicants from minority groups. The same intensity of efforts was noted in the admissions process where publicity and special programs for parents have been set up in the hopes of identifying as many qualified students as possible for the entrance examination.

At the conclusion of the investigation, faculty, students, and parents met as sub-groups to draft recommendations that would focus on their particular needs and interests. They were then presented to the Committee as a whole for consideration and endorsement.

For the purposes of the Committee's work, the phrase cultural pluralism was defined as a positive goal for us to continue to work toward: a student body and staff that reflects, as far as possible, the diversity of our city, an intellectual approach that is globally inclusive, and an attitude of acceptance of cultural diversity among faculty, students and parents.

The members of the Committee believe that cultural pluralism is fundamental to the process of teaching and learning. They recognize that, as a school, we have made progress in this regard in curriculum development, some independently and some through stipends for summer work, special electives, assembly programs, energetic recruitment and hiring practices, and attentiveness in the student admissions process. It was also acknowledged that we have a distance to go.

The Committee's recommendations are as follows:

1. The Principal should institute a program of professional development to provide faculty and administrators with opportunities to explore and to become

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further informed about the following:

A. the diverse backgrounds of our students:

1) their particular needs as they bring home and school together in their lives;

2) the kinds of problems related to diversity which they may experience both inside and outside the classroom at Hunter;

3) the impact of cultural traditions on learning styles;

B. the educational implications of our students' diversity:

1) pertinent curricular issues identified by the various departments with the understanding that cultural sensitivity be exercised in curriculum design;

2) development of more inclusive teaching strategies and methods;

3) Hunter's strengths and weaknesses in addressing the issues of cultural diversity and sensitivity to cultural differences.

This program should be implemented through a series of symposia and workshops and ongoing discussion groups, panels, faculty meetings and through direct contact with the communities within the City.

2. The Principal/Campus Schools Director should continue to demonstrate his ongoing commitment to cultural pluralism and the issues associated with cultural diversity as a priority by facilitating program allowances, financial resources for materials and stipends for summer work. This will enable teachers and departments, individually and jointly, to respond to the needs associated with diversity in the school and society at large. The issues raised in the professional development program may serve as a catalyst for these efforts.

Assistance should also be provided by the administration to facilitate school and faculty access to grant monies for this purpose in addition to those already available through the Principal's fund.

3. An outreach program should be established in which volunteer faculty members, parents and students are involved directly with the various communities and learning institutions of the City to ensure that ALL gifted children have access to the admissions process. It is further recommended that the outreach effort be targeted at 5th and 6th grades. This is done to maximize the representation of the City's culturally diverse population in the pool of students who are eligible for the entrance examination.

The administration and the person in charge of admissions for the High School should be responsible for implementing this program and for training interested participants to carry it out. The necessary funds and other resources should be made available for this purpose.

In addition, specific efforts should be made by students, parents, faculty and the administration working together to identify and address problems that have led to transfers of students of color from Hunter and to aggressively seek strategies to reduce that attrition rate.

4. Involvement of the Big Sibs and especially the Peer Counseling groups should be increased, with emphasis on the 7th and 8th graders. The Peer Counselors and the Big Sibs should attend a workshop on respecting and working with people of diverse ethnic backgrounds and sexual orientations. The workshop should also address ethnic, racial, gender, religious, and gay and lesbian stereotypes.

5. In junior and senior college workshops, misconceptions concerning the affirmative action policies of college admission should be addressed.

6. Mechanisms should be created to identify and support the needs of any members of the Hunter community who have been mistreated because of their ethnic and racial backgrounds, gender, religion, or sexual orientations. A process should be developed for dealing with charges of sexual, racial, or other forms of harassment.

7. The PTA should identify members of the Hunter Community, students and/or parents, who would be willing and able to translate the "Hunter Hilites" or act as translators at PTA meetings. It is further recommended that professionals who are bilingual or trilingual be identified and referred to the Counseling Department to assist in translation where needed and that monies be allocated for this purpose as required. This recommendation is designed to meet the needs of parents whose first language is other than English.

8. At the regular orientation meeting(s), incoming teachers should be acquainted with Hunter's commitment to recognizing the diversity of the Hunter community and to respecting ALL students regardless of race, ethnic or linguistic background, gender, creed, or sexual orientation.

In order to maximize a healthy climate of cultural pluralism at Hunter High School, it is essential to enlist the support of parents. Parents may also give the faculty and students opportunities to interact with people from cultures with which they have had limited exposure. Personal contact has always been one of the most effective ways of breaking down stereotypes. In addition, the parents of Hunter students are a tremendous resource for the school as it continues to develop the curriculum to reflect the contributions and history of all cultures.

Following are additional recommendations that may serve to enhance the Hunter parent contribution to the multicultural climate and give a sense of ownership to all the members of this diverse community.

9. The PTA should expand its international focus beyond the Pot Luck Supper, which successfully brings together a diverse group of parents to support the school. Other PTA meetings can be developed around the needs and interests of its diverse population. Some examples may include:

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a. panels on multicultural issues at Hunter College High School which includes students and parents representing different viewpoints.

b. presentations by representatives of the various ethnic, cultural, and religious clubs at Hunter.

c. speakers to address issues of children of immigrants, biculturalism and the intergenerational stress often caused by the clash of cultures.

d. racism, sexism, homophobia - what parents can do to prepare children to deal with issues of racism in this less than perfect world everyone must share.

10. The PTA should maintain its Cultural Diversity Committee to continue to explore ways of reaching out to the different ethnic, cultural and religious communities, identify issues particular to those communities and thus ensure that the PTA will be inclusive, sensitive, and responsive to the needs of all parents. A special effort should be made to provide support for parents of incoming 7th graders.

11. The PTA should demonstrate its commitment to diversity. To this end, its governing document should reflect this commitment. Its officers and its programs should serve the needs of the diverse student body.

12. The faculty should explore ways of further utilizing the expertise of parents to enhance cultural pluralism at Hunter High School, to heighten sensitivity to cultural issues and to ensure a nondiscriminatory climate in the school.

13. The school should expand its efforts to identify and recruit qualified faculty from a large pool of culturally diverse applicants.

14. The Principal/Campus Schools Director should seek additional sources of funding for the school library, including grants and donations, to expand our holdings relating to issues of cultural diversity and reflecting a variety of viewpoints and experiences.

Closing Recommendation

In closing, the Committee recommends that the conversation begun by this group, and reflected in these recommendations, be continued through the establishment of a Standing Committee on Cultural Diversity, open to all interested students, parents and faculty, and welcoming people of all ethnic groups, cultures, religious constituencies, and sexual orientations represented in the Hunter community.

The purpose of this new committee would be fourfold:

1) to serve as a forum where students, parents and faculty could meet on a ongoing basis to discuss relevant issues of concern in society as they arise throughout the school year;

2) to be a resource for the development and implementation of further recommendations which might emerge from this forum.

3) to establish a timeline for all relevant items of the document;

4) to report periodically to the faculty on the status of the implementation of the foregoing recommendations.

Furthermore, this Committee affirms that Hunter's students, parents and faculty are all valuable resources in enhancing the culturally pluralistic character of the school. They can be of great assistance to each other in helping all students to feel part of the Hunter community and to have greater respect and understanding of each other's cultures. To this end, the Committee encourages the faculty to incorporate a statement regarding cultural pluralism into the school's philosophy.

Finally, the Committee affirms that these recommendations are intended to reflect the beginning of what is hoped to be an ongoing dialogue on diversity at Hunter, rather than an ending.

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Ayana Duckett (11-2)
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Appendix C

Report in Progress of the Standing Committee

on Cultural Diversity

The full report is over 30 pages long. Persons interested in obtaining a copy can write to the author, or download the report from the Hunter College High School homepage on the Internet after September 15, 1997.

Appendix D

The Hunter College High School Middle States

Self-study Report The Cultural Diversity Committee

The full report is very extensive and lengthy. Persons interested in obtaining a copy can write to the author, or download the report from the Hunter College High School homepage on the Internet after September 15, 1997.

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